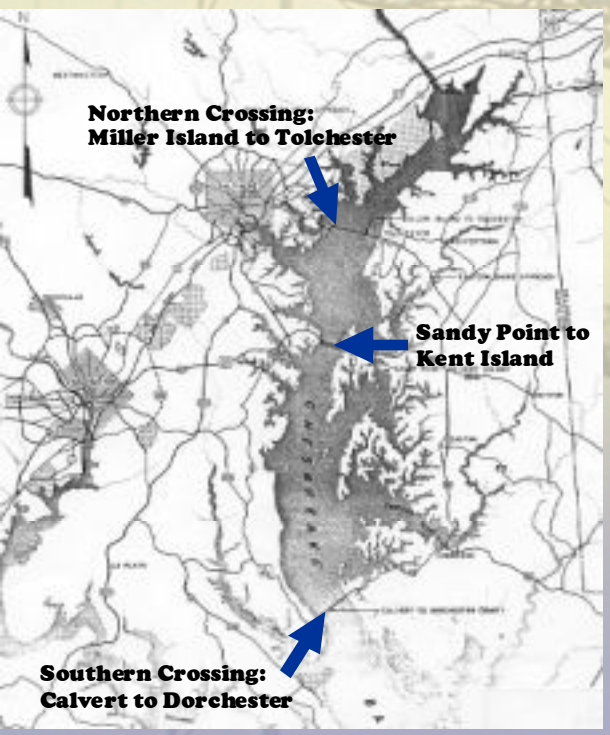
Task Force on Traffic Capacity Across the Chesapeake Bay

Bay Bridge History

Chesapeake Bay crossings have been studied since the 19th Century



Source: Location Studies – Chesapeake Bay Crossings prepared for the State Roads Commission of Maryland by J.E. Greiner Company - January, 1965

Three locations have been proposed in the past:

Northern, Central, and Southern crossings

Time Line of Previous Studies

- In the latter part of the 19th century, sketchy preliminary studies were made to span the Bay by bridge
- 1919 - Private interests fund preliminary studies for a bridge between Miller Island and Tolchester (the "Northern crossing")
- 1928 Report - Specifications, Contract, and Bond for a Highway Bridge Over the Chesapeake Bay
- 1931 - The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Company receives legislative authority to construct the Miller Island-Tolchester Bay Bridge
- 1931 - Governor Ritchie appoints a commission to study the new concept of "revenue bond financing" to fund Bay bridge
- 1938 - State Roads Commission initiates studies of four principal bridge or tunnel needs in the State (*See Maryland's Primary Bridge Program prepared for the Commission by J.E. Greiner Company)*
- 1947 - Legislature passes a comprehensive Act authorizing construction of a Chesapeake Bay Bridge, from Sandy Point to Kent Island. Bridge financed with revenue bonds consolidated with two prior toll bridges
- 1949 - Construction on the approach roads and the bridge began
- July 30, 1952 - The original Chesapeake Bay Bridge was opened to traffic
- 1962 - Traffic volumes on original two-lane Bay Bridge had nearly doubled
- 1966 - Traffic Evaluation Study for Proposed Chesapeake Bay Bridge at Three Alternative Locations, and Bridge Location Study
- May 6, 1966 - Governor J. Millard Tawes signs Senate Bill 153 authorizing the construction of a second, parallel Bay Bridge as well as other Bay crossings (the "Bay Bridge Bill")
- June 28, 1967 - State Roads Commission gives first priority to constructing a parallel bridge
- May 28, 1968 - U.S. Coast Guard grants construction permit
- May 19, 1969 - Work on the new bridge begins
- June 28, 1973 - The second Bay Bridge was completed and opened

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The Bay Bridge Today

Regional Significance:

- More than 25 million vehicles crossed the bridge in 2004
- Connects Maryland's Eastern Shore and its recreational attractions with the metropolitan areas of Baltimore, Annapolis, and Washington, D.C.
- Only roadway crossing of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland
- The US 50 / 301 corridor serves as a regional alternative to north-south routes, I-95 and US 13
- The three lanes of US 50 leading to the bridge, in each direction, can carry about 6,000 cars per hour, significantly in excess of the roughly 4,500 maximum one-way capacity of the bridge
- Tolls are collected only in the eastbound direction on the bridge
- A series of 11 toll booths are situated approximately 600' before the beginning of the eastbound span
- Currently, there are two E-ZPass^{SM} only toll lanes and nine cash or ticket lanes
- The eastbound deck will require major rehabilitation between 2015 and 2020

Bay Bridge Fast Facts:

- Original bridge span, opened 53 years ago, has two lanes, each 12-feet 6-inches wide, with 1-foot 7-inch on each shoulder, and cost $45 million
- The second span, opened 32 years ago, has three lanes, each 12-feet wide, with 1-foot on each shoulder, and cost $148 million
- The bridge is 4 miles long and 379 feet high at the highest point. The roadway rises 186 feet above the waters of the Bay

The MdTA has been implementing progressive strategies to relieve congestion today; however, future congestion is projected to increase to the point where new capacity will be needed.

BAY BRIDGE taking the heat out of summer travel

1. Widening Toll-Plaza Departure
2. Dedicating Westbound Contra-flow Lane for *E-ZPass*^{SM} Customers
3. Aggressive Marketing of *E-ZPass*^{SM} and *E-ZPass*^{SM} "On the Go"
4. "Pop-Up" Lane Dividers
5. Adding More Vehicle-Recovery Technicians
6. New Overhead Dynamic Message Sign
7. Using Shoulders on MD 8 for Local Residents
8. Partnering with DBED on "Go Early...Stay Late" Program
9. "State-of-the-Bridge" Message System (1-877-BAY-SPAN)
10. Public and Media Outreach